

## MEMORANDUM

We attach the remainder of the Report on Special Religious Problems, XI, for the Montevideo Congress, the first section of which we mailed to you some days ago.

Re Montevideo Congress

Copy of a letter  
from Bishop Wm. C. Brown in re  
Report of Commission  
on  
Special Religious Problems

Richmond, Va., Dec. 20, 1924.

My dear Inman:

I beg to acknowledge yours of the 18th enclosing a copy of a letter from Dr. Winton and the three chapters of Report No. 11.

It does not seem to me quite fair to ~~xxxxx~~ criticise Dr. Mackay's report after such a hasty examination as I have been able to make of it. I do want, however, to deplicate what might seem to be a concerted attack on the established church of South America.

You know how strongly I feel about the whole Roman system, and yet I felt while a missionary in Brazil and still fee that much the wisest plan is to present the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour without mentioning at all the Church of Rome. I combatted consistently what I conceived to be the errors of the Church of Rome, such as auricular confession, etc., but I did not find it necessary to mention the Church of Rome by name. I suppose, of course, that it is impossible to deal with the subject without mentioning the Church of Rome, but I do think that the papers ought to be carefully edited to avoid the impression that a gathering of Protestants are coming together from different parts of the world for the purpose of attacking what the people are constantly taught is the church of their fathers.

You did not ask me to do so, but it seems to me that I ought to return to you the report.

With all good wishes at this blessed Christmas time,  
I am -

Faithfully yours,

WM. CABELL BROWN

5. The Attitude of the Evangelical Missionary Movement

towards the Roman Catholic Church.

What should this be? Three attitudes are possible.

(1). Evangelical workers may adopt an attitude of frank hostility towards Catholicism, losing no opportunity of wielding against its beliefs, practices and institutions the hammer of the iconoclast, and making every blow resound to the music of that ancient battle-cry *DELENDUM est CARTAGO*. (2) They may work for the Reformation of the Roman Catholic Church in South America, believing that a reformed Catholicism is the great need and only hope of Christianity on the Continent. (3) They may devote themselves constructively to their own tasks, relegating the whole question of Catholicism to the margin of consciousness, in the faith that the entrance of light is the best solution for problems created by darkness.

(1) Those who adopt the first attitude mentioned are a decreasing minority. They are in general Evangelicals whose work has brought them into very close grips with Romanism as a system, and whose tempers bear the scars of conflict. Or they may be men who, believing that Romanism is the Apocalyptic "Mother of Harlots", cease not to sound trumpets of denunciation against her and would contribute by vials of fierce controversy, to kindle the "fires of her burning". A missionary in Columbia writes:

"I favour the first opinion. In the first place because it is the attitude the Church itself obliges me to take in self-defence, also because I believe Romanism is counterfeit Christianity, the Devil's institution to take the place of the genuine article."

Experience has proved that direct attacks on the Romish system are unwise. They will not convince or influence faithful Catholics, but rather embitter them, while they will to a certainty provoke a counter-attack by the hierarchy. They will tend to prejudice the more seriously minded among the general public, who as a rule know more about the sins and shortcomings of Catholicism than anything that can be told them. Moreover, for foreigners to attack the Romish system in its own territory is bad strategy for this reason, that such an attack will almost certainly arouse a sentimental and patriotic reaction in favour of the Mother Church in the hearts of many who would otherwise be quite indifferent to religious issues. Direct attacks on Romanism in a Roman Catholic country will influence in a positive way only those already connected with the Evangelical movement, and then it will influence chiefly by engendering in their hearts a species of spiritual pride little favourable to the development of the higher Christian virtues. Converts are not often made by controversial argumentation, nor will the dissection of falsehood always increase the affection for truth. In this connection an Uruguayan pastor has written very sane words:

"We must avoid assuming the attitude which is so vulgar and easy, as well as improper, that is often adopted in religious and political controversy, that namely of pretending to dissimulate error, or magnify our own merits while we lay special emphasis on the errors and fail to recognize the merits of those who are opposed to us. When we are attacked, we believe that we should merely answer by putting clear emphasis on our own beliefs, and by censoring the adulterations of the truth and the dogmas which have been established by Romanism, as against the teachings of the gospel."

A Colombian lawyer has words to the same effect:

"My opinion is that the Catholic religion should be combated only by setting forth the superiority of the Evangelical by means of an intense effort carried on through schools, public lectures and literature, added to the religious service and efficient ecclesiastical organization. .... Any other method of campaign I consider prejudicial. It begins by putting the aggressor on the same level as the attacked and ends by ennobling the latter and depreciating the former."

(2) While sentimentalists are not lacking who believe with Francisco Barcia Calderón in the possibility of a reformed Catholicism in South America which would worthily and effectively represent vital Christianity, the majority of impartial observers consider such an eventuality to be a vain hope. Says an Argentine University professor:

"In South America Roman Catholicism is destined to become more and more wretchedly worldly and political."

The only hope of reformation would be separation from Rome and the formation of national churches, like the recently formed National Church of Czecho-Slovakia. As we have already seen, the presence of Evangelical activity acts as a stimulus to the Roman Catholic Church and stirs her to laudable emulation in many directions. So much is this so, that there are South American Catholics of a liberal type who favor Protestant competition for the sake of its salutary effect upon their own Church. Wherever righteousness appears and under whatever auspices, loyal Christian hearts will rejoice. But to cherish the hope that peripheral accommodations to circumstances are a prelude to general reformation and a change of heart, evidences little knowledge of the essence and history of Romanism. We do not believe, moreover, that even a reformed Catholicism, if it continued to be related to the Roman See would ever be an adequate solution of the religious problems of South America, any more than the Papacy can be regarded as an expression of Christianity with a permanent nature. For these reasons it appears to us that the representatives of Evangelical Christianity in South America should think of their work as having a higher aim and a remoter significance than the reformation of Catholicism. Their thinking, in a word, should not be in terms of reforming anything but of informing everything.

(3) Our conclusion is, therefore, that Evangelical Christians in South America should not regard the Roman Catholic Church as an object for their sword to attack or their trowel to restore. Rather with one eye on Christ and His gospel and the other on human need, they will develop a constructive policy. What that policy should be we will consider in the last chapter, after dealing with minor religious influences which seek to oust historical Christianity on the Continent.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THE PROBLEM OF MINOR RELIGIOUS INFLUENCES.

Before passing on to consider the Problem of Evangelical Work and Progress, let us turn aside to take a glance at some of the main influences of a religious or quasi-religious order, which dispute the claims and progress of historical Christianity on the Continent. Chief among such influences are Theosophy, Spiritualism, Positivism and Christian Science. A study of these systems will be fruitful in two regards. It will help us, in the first place, to understand better the general religious situation in South America, and, in the second place, it will serve to give us a more comprehensive view of the task to be confronted by those who would enthrone Jesus Christ in human hearts, human minds and human relationships, that is to say, in the emotional, the intellectual and the social life of the South American people.

A few observations on the general religious significance of the systems mentioned will serve as a background for the study of each in turn.

These systems represent a double reaction, from Catholicism, on the one hand, and from Scepticism on the other. When a thoughtful South American breaks with Catholicism, his almost inevitable resort is Scepticism. His spiritual pilgrimage from absolute belief to absolute doubt/ is natural for two reasons. In the first place, because as a Catholic he was trained to think in terms of absolute unity and absolute truth, so that when he came to doubt Catholicism, the possibility of there being any other religious ~~suxys~~ system that might serve as a resting place for his spirit never occurred to him. In the second place, because temperamentally, as we saw in the first chapter, a typical South American has a natural propensity towards extremes. In recent years, however, a marked spiritual unrest has made its appearance in all classes, but especially in the intellectual class. Scepticism has nothing to offer to a soul hungry for companionship, to eyes that gaze wistfully at the sky, to hands that search nervously for implements to undertake the work of social reconstruction. The systems we are about to study are some of the spiritual resorts of a new army of seekers.

These systems afford an illustration of two facts: (1) that a metaphysic of existence is an innate necessity of the human mind; (2) that rationalism will not provide an adequate metaphysic. The heart also has its reasons, and these reasons may sometimes lead the acutest minds to formulate quite fantastic hypotheses. Man must have a reasoned view of reality. Theosophy

is essentially a quest for truth in the absolute sense and centres in a special cosmological view of existence. Spiritualism occupies itself especially with the exploration of the border land of mystery between the visible and the invisible, between the incarnate and the disincarnate. Its chief interest is eschatology and apocalypsis. Positivism is the application of the natural science method to human relationships. It makes sociology the queen of the sciences and apotheosises humanity. Christian Science deals particularly with the problems of evil and pain. Disease it regards as illusory, being a subjective error of the mind and curable by a perfect knowledge of the essence of God. In a word, Theosophy is a theory of universal life; Spiritualism is a theory of soul life; Positivism a theory of social life, and Christian Science a theory of physical life. In each case the theory possesses a religious value for those who believe it.

An examination of these several theories of life and their influence in South America will serve our present purpose in much the same way as a study of mental abnormality serves the psychologist. They will reveal to us tendencies of the spirit of man in search of God and salvation and will serve equally with our examination of present day Catholicism to afford us a clue as to the full magnitude of the task that confronts Evangelical Christianity in South America and as to the special way in which that task should be approached.

In view of the fact that the four systems mentioned are very unequally represented in South American countries, being practically non-existent in several, we propose to study them as they have developed in Brazil. Their development in that country may be taken as typical of what may be expected to take place in other countries. We are fortunate moreover in having received from Brazil a very full study of the whole subject, a study which we have pleasure in incorporating very largely in this Report.

(a) Theosophy.

Theosophy professes to be a philosophy, a science and a religion. It professes to embrace all that is true in every department of human thought and research and is at once eclectic and synthetic. Its devotees like to call it the "World Religion". They find aspects of theosophic truth scattered through the ancient Aryan literatures, in Zoroastrianism, in Chaldean and Hebrew thought, and especially in the Greek pantheistic philosophy. Their spiritual ancestors in the Christian era are the Neoplatonists of the early Christian centuries and in later times Bruno, Spinoza, Boehme, Swedenborg and Eliphas Levi.

The modern theosophical movement originated in 1875, when the Theosophical Society was founded by Madame Blavatsky and Col. H. S. Olcott. The objects of the society were: (1) To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without regard to race, creed, sex, caste or color. (2) To promote the study of Aryan and other Eastern literatures, religions, philosophies and sciences; and to demonstrate the importance of that study. (3) To investigate the unexplained laws of nature and the psychic powers latent in man.

In 1877 Madame Blavatsky published a book entitled *ISIS UNVEILED, A SYNTHESIS OF RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE*. It is now claimed, according to one of the expounders of the system, Walter R. Old, that the "Theosophical Society was under the direction of certain Masters of the Wisdom-Religion (Mahatmas or "Great Souls"), adepts in occult science, who had instructed Madame Blavatsky in its mysteries and deep philosophy, and whose mouthpiece in the ancient world she was."

In South America the theosophical movement has ~~taken~~ taken strong roots in Chile, the Argentine and Brazil. The Brazilian Report says:

"Theosophists are at present very active. Among them are found leading men in science, military service and educated classes.

We call the following facts from a sketch of the theosophical movement in Brazil by General Raymundo P. Seidl, General Sec. of the Brazilian Section of the Theosophical Society.

On December 17th, 1875, the Theosophic Society was founded in New York. Not until the year 1902 was the first Brazilian Lodge established. Six years previous Prof. Dario Vellozo had published, so far as we know, the first work on Theosophy in Brazil.

About this time there was formed in Rio/ a nucleus of investigators. They were interested merely in the scientific side of the doctrine, ignoring the religious aspect. They failed.

At this time also a group of Germans from Santa Catharina attempted to establish a Theosophic Colony. They too failed. The time was not yet ripe.

In the latter part of the year 1902 the blind Prof. Henrique Rocha brought to Rio from Buenos Aires a copy of the work of Helena Blavatsky, *THE HIDDEN DOCTRINE (A Doutrina Secreta)*.

Certain officials and students of the Military School flocked to study this work. Shortly after this there appeared in the vernacular - translated by Henrique Serra - Mademoiselle Aimée Bleck's book entitled "A CEUX QUI SOUFFRENT". This very concise little work, in beautiful language, has been one of the most fruitful elements of propaganda in Brazil.

In March, 1910, when the Spanish theosoph, Dr. Mario Rosa de Luna arrived here, there were then in Rio de Janeiro many students of theosophy. Dr. Luna's visit to Brazil was promoted by Argentine theosophs, the chief promoter being Sr. Frederico W. Fernandez, pensioned captain of the Argentine Navy, then representative of the President of S. T. in South America.

Dr. Rosa de Luna spent seven days in Rio, proving himself very active and efficient. On April 28th, 1910, the second Brazilian Lodge - the *PERSEVERANCA* - was established. After this others were founded.

Their programme, as defined by General Seidl, is as follows:

Each of these lodges seeks to be a means of conveying the teachings of the Theosophic Instructors. With open arms they receive all who approach them. To serve Humanity, through service to God, is the ideal to which they aspire. No one is deprived of religious instruction in their meetings. All are treated with equal respect and veneration. On November 17th, 1919, all the Brazilian Lodges met and founded the Brazilian Section of the Theosophic Society. Some months previous the Argentine and Chilean sections had been formed."

It is a notable fact that within the ranks of Theosophy are found many of the most intellectual and progressive characters in the South American countries where the society has been established.

(b) Spiritualism.

"Spiritualism is the name given to a movement in existence since 1848, which might be called religious, philosophical or scientific, and believes in the communication with 'another world', together with the existence of phenomena which cannot be explained by ordinary physical laws." (New Age Encyclopedia.)

Spiritualism has counted among its adherents some of the most notable scientific and literary men of modern times. Among these may be mentioned F. W. M. Myers, the Author of "Saint Paul", Sir William Crookes, the famous physicist, Alfred Russel Wallace, the co-discoverer with Darwin of the theory of Evolution, W. T. Stead, the great journalist, Arthur Conan Doyle, the author of "Sherlock Holmes", and Sir Oliver Lodge, the distinguished Principal of Birmingham University.

The only South American country from which we have received data regarding spiritualism is Brazil, the chief reason being, we believe, that only in Brazil has the movement assumed proportions of consequence. The fact stated in the Brazilian Report, that "Spiritualism must be looked upon as the great religious movement in Brazil - it has literally spread throughout the country, leads us to focus our whole attention on Brazil and gives supreme interest to the following valuable account of the propagation of spiritualism in that country:

"Spiritualism in Brazil is an offshoot of the movement in France which began in 1855 with the activities of Allan Kardec.

The first society was organized in Brazil in 1873 under the name of Confucius. It was shortlived. In 1876 the group "God, Christ and Charity" was established, having the definite aim of studying the teachings of Jesus from the standpoint of Spiritualism. In 1879 there was a split in this society, and the seceders organized a new group "Brotherhood", under the auspices of the "Spirit Ismael", supposed to be the guardian of spiritualism in Brazil. This group was disbanded in 1893. In the meanwhile a number of groups were organized in many states of Brazil.

The grand total of members (according to statistics made in 1919 by Souza Moraes) is 271,530.



The stronghold of Spiritualism in Brazil is the capital of the Republic. The more efficient and well organized movements are those in the States of Amazonas, Pará, Pernambuco, Parahyba, Alagoas, Bahia, Rio, Minas, S. Paulo, Paraná and Sta. Catharina where Federations have been established.

There is not a national organization as an organic centre of the movement. Since 1902, the idea of linking together the scattered groups into a national confederation has been discussed in the spiritualistic press, and in congresses.

Small groups of spirituslists are usually formed by meeting in private houses to hold "sessions" for study of Allan Kardec's books, Roustaing's Christian Spiritualism and for invocation of spirits. Some mediums who have a reputation of possessing a special gift to prescribe medicines, almost exclusively homeopathic, attract large numbers of clients. And so, many "centros" exist everywhere without a formal organization. There is not a bond to link them together as an organic movement.

This explains why there is a disproportionate number of adherents to affiliated members in the societies which have replied to Sr. Moraes. A plan of a national organization was proposed in 1910 by the magazine of the Federation in Rio, but up to this date the idea has not made much headway. One of the great obstacles in the way of this united organization is a doctrinal difference of opinion involving a Christological controversy, a large number of spiritualists accept only the views of Allan Kardec, which is the strongest society in the country has also adopted Roustaing's views. There are records of 26 special buildings erected and owned by local societies, 9 being in S. Paulo. The Brazilian Federation in Rio rooms in an imposing building dedicated on January 10th, 1911, very near to the National Treasury. The story of this society is typical. On January 1st, 1884, a small group of spiritualists met together in the residence of a well known photographer. Among them there were an army officer, a well known poet and journalist and business men. They formed the Brazilian Spiritualistic Federation. Political troubles disbanded the society in 1923, but in the meanwhile the magazine "o Reformador", which is still published, was founded, public lectures were delivered, and the society had been able to secure the visit of the medium Henry Slade (1838).

In 1895, after a severe crisis, Dr. Bezerra de Menezes, a physician, was elected president, and under his leadership the society developed wonderfully. Dr. Menezes was an able writer and a fluent speaker. He lectured every week on the gospels according to spiritualism until his death (April 11th, 1900.) The textbook adopted was A. Kardec's BOOK OF SPIRITS, after the lecture there followed one hour for experiments, i. e. invocation of spirits. Dr. Bezerra's works under the title ESPIRITISMO; ESTUDOS PHILOSOFICOS, have been published.

In 1889, Dr. Bezerra de Menezes made an attempt at unifying the forces of Spiritualism in Rio, but failed because the members of the group FRATERNITY had adopted Roustaing's views, which Bezerra de Menezes only accepted later on.

(\* in regard to the humanity of Jesus the Brazilian Federation)

In 1900, the International Spiritualistic Congress in Paris, gave opportunity to 79 societies in Brazil to agree on having at the Congress a representative, and Mr. Leon Dehis was elected the delegate of Brazil. Again in 1904, to celebrate the centenary of Allan Kardec, there was a gathering of State and local delegates, representing some 60 groups and Federations. The delegates adopted the Plans for Spiritual Organization, but heretofore this plan has not been successfully carried out.

The activities of this Society are: a membership department, a library, sessions or didactic and experimental services, a dispensary, help for funerals, eleemosynary department, a book store and editorial department, and a judicial department to defend members and groups when brought before the courts. Plans have been made to establish a hospital and schools. There is in S. Paulo a hospital under the management of a leading druggist. Others have been recently established in Rio and elsewhere.

From 1900 to 192 the dispensary had prepared 2,225,782 prescriptions. The medical medium prescribes, as it is presumed, under the immediate guidance of a spirit. As the medical profession is strictly regulated in this country, the spiritualistic organizations which have dispensaries, and individual healing mediums have very frequently been in conflict with Public Health officers.

In 1905 the Federation in Rio was absolved by a local judge from the charge of illegal ministrations of medicines. Recently a medium was fined by the Public Health Department and by a popular list of subscription the amount was raised to pay up the fine.

Everywhere, the small groups and societies show a tendency to shape their strongest organizations after the enterprising association located in Rio. The larger number of them carry on the invocation of spirits, doctrinal study and frequently so, healing, using either homeopathic medicines or pure water, to which a fluid power is supposed to have been imparted by a medium.

Let us now sketch the impressions we have of the infiltration of the movement in the country.

The propaganda is made intensively through the spiritualistic press, of which there are some 22 periodicals and through the secular press. One of the spiritualistic papers is reported to issue 50,000 copies. Personal work, in conversation and by handing away copies of magazines and leaflets is very noticeable.

As religious teaching was very deficient in the Roman Catholic Church before the present reaction towards a better organization of the work and catechetical teaching, many souls that were tired and hungry fell under the attraction of Spiritualism.

And as the clergy does not inquire after the personal convictions of their sheep, as long as they comply with the Church's ceremonies and do not refuse donations to the Church, many persons are both Roman Catholic and Spiritualists, seeking in both doctrines and practices a remedy to calm a troubled conscience, to alleviate their suffering, all to be sure that in some way they will escape punishment for their sins. Superstition and an old bent toward the animistic beliefs of Indians and Africans, still surviving through folk-lore and the influence of servants, a widespread dislike of physicians and official medical science, makes the healing ministry of Spiritualism welcome to many. The worship of St. Michael and the Holy Souls countenanced and fostered by the Roman Catholic Church furnishes a favorable background to the invocations of spirits. A reaction against agnosticism, which is very strong among intellectuals, and the fascination of psychological studies and research, makes the scientific features of Spiritualism appeal strongly to a good number of educated men.

Then, as Spiritualism gives much more attention to the reading of the Scriptures than the Romish Church, the Evangelical elements of its doctrine is attractive to others. A large number of Spiritualistic leaders emphasize the preaching of the gospel, by which they mean the gospel according to Spiritualism, as interpreted by Allan Kardec. Even Sunday schools and the singing of hymns have been introduced in some places.

As a rule, a large number, though not all, of the leading Spiritualists being anti-clerical, also attack Protestantism, which is represented as inadequate, being only a step toward Spiritism, and a grotesque revolt against popery."

.....

"The great tenets of Spiritualism are:

1. The law of spiritual evolution, which will ensure universal salvation through personal expiatory experience and purifying suffering.
2. The law of action and reaction, which explains suffering and makes it a necessary and uplifting process of approach to God.
3. Charity, i. e. practice of beneficence as the only expression of religion.
4. The need of guidance by spirits not only as to the ~~myster~~ mysteries of death but as a help to every day problems."

.....

The report concludes: "Spiritualism is the great challenge to Evangelism today in Brazil."

(c) Positivism.

Positivism is associated with the name of the French phil-

osopher Auguste Comte (1798-1857). The New Age Encyclopedia has a luminous and synthetic account of his system which we here quote:

"Comte's work, despite its diverse elements, can be regarded as a unity. He had written a "Plan of the Scientific Works" necessary to reorganize Society" in 1822, in which he pointed out the co-existence of two tendencies, one to the break-up of old institutions, the other to new forms of social evolution. He became imbued with great admiration for the Catholic Church, and wanted to adapt the methods and principles of the mediaeval Church to new social conditions, for a Religion of Humanity. He desired to imitate closely the organization and rites but not the doctrines of Catholicism. He formulated the Law of the Three States, according to which knowledge was (1) theological (belief in supernatural government of the world), (2) metaphysical (objects are ruled by external but abstract force), (3) positive (law explains everything). He arranged the sciences in order, beginning with maths. and ending with sociology; each depended on the one preceding, and sociology, the most advanced, was the last to be understood. In his later works he raises humanity to the place held by God in monotheism. Amongst other ideas, he believed in the enormous importance of women in the social state. His system despite its brilliance and suggestiveness on many points, has not as a whole won very wide acceptance."

A generation ago Positivism was a powerful force in South America. Today only in Brazil is its influence felt. The history of the movement in that country is interesting:

"The first Society created in Brazil for the study of Positivism was established on April 1st, 1870, which was reorganized in 1878, and again on the 11th May, 1887. Miguel de Lemos being the president, this society organized the Positivist Church in Brazil.

A new development in 1891, changed it into the Positivist Church and Apostolate in Brazil. In 1897 the Positivists dedicated their beautiful temple in Rio.

The growth of the Positivist Church is so figured, 1878, 5 members, men; 1888, 39 men and 11 women members; in 1898, 52 men and 28 women; in 1908, 85 men and 61 women; in 1917, 84 men and 74 women, total 158.

No data are available for the recent years, but there has been an increase in the activities of this small group; whose intellectual and political influence is entirely out of proportion to their number.

Most of the advanced political ideas incorporated in the organization of republican life and government are due to Positivist leaders, and in particular to general Benjamin Constant, the leader of the republican youth in the military school. To his engaging personality and high character much of the prestige of the movement was due. He was one of the men who contributed most the proclamation

of Republic.

Their motto ORDER AND PROGRESS is on the national flags. Positivists have been jealous defenders of religious and personal liberty, and at their influence in the administration the Roman Catholic reaction is at present taking definite aim. They have published a large number of books dealing with their doctrines, political attitude and social problems.

In close connection with Spencer's agnosticism, Positivism has been these thirty years a strong intellectual force in Latin America against Christianity, and definitely against Evangelical Christianity, Positivistic view of history being that the Reformation was a great drawback in the normal development of humanity because Roman Catholicism, according to Comte's view, was a direct preparation for Positivism."

(d) Christian Science.

From the New Age Encyclopedia we quote also the following account of Christian Science:

"Christian Science, a religious system originated in America in 1866 by Mrs. Mary Baker Glover Eddy, which teaches that since man's essential nature is spiritual, the body of man being an exact manifestation of his mind, therefore a perfect knowledge of the nature and essence of God not only prevents but cures bodily disease, which is a subjective state of error. SCIENCE AND HEALTH WITH KEY TO THE SCRIPTURES, by Mrs. Eddy, the textbook of the system, was first published in 1875; several hundred editions have subsequently appeared. Mrs. Eddy at first expressed herself as averse from starting a new church, but the Church of Christ Scientist was organized in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1879. It consist of the Mother Church, the First Church of Christ Scientist, and has branches throughout the world, numbering in 1920 nearly 1,900. The growth of the sect has been remarkable, and it may be regarded as sharing with the Salvation Army the distinction of being the most significant religious movement of the English-speaking world in the 19th century."

So far as we have been able to ascertain, this movement is confined in South America to foreign residents in the larger centres. Even in Brazil Christian Science can claim no national adherents.

"There is but one small group among the English-speaking residents in Rio. So far as we know, no other organization exists in Brazil. It is quite probable that there are individuals scattered in other towns: no propaganda is made among Brazilians."

The Attitude of Evangelical Christianity Towards these Systems.

This is not the place for a full discussion of these religious systems. Our chief concern here is to point out those aspects in each which are most objectionable from an Evangelical viewpoint, and at the same time, give suggestions as to how the influence of each can best be counteracted. The two former deal chiefly with the spiritual, the two latter with the material.

(1) Regarding Theosophy we offer the following reflections:

(a) The alleged originality of Madame Blavatsky, the founder of modern Theosophy, and the veracity of her statements regarding the receipt of missives from Mahatmas, have been completely disproved. Her book, *ISIS UNVEILED*, has been shewn to be pure plagiarism. In this connection, those interested in combating Theosophy should reach such books as Garrett's *ISIS VERY MUCH UNVEILED*, Podmore's *STUDIES IN PSYCHICAL RESEARCH* and Solovyoff's, *A MODERN PRIESTESS OF ISIS*. These books will shew that the movement had its origin in a fountain of mendacity and deceit.

(b) The theosophic conceptions of Karma and Reincarnation have logical consequences of a very disastrous kind. They cut at the nerve of sympathy for the distressed, who may be regarded as simply suffering the consequences of sin in a former existence, while one's preoccupation about one's own condition is made an excuse for not troubling about others. Moreover, all salvation is the result of individual effort and no room is left for the sublime principle of Grace nor yet for that of vicarious sacrifice. Where there is no place for the exercise of the Grace of God, the main-spring is taken from true religious life and experience. Not only so, but a sense of personal sin and responsibility is lowered in Theosophy. Regret is regarded as weakness, and so repentance has no meaning. Yet to repent is to cross the threshold of a new life: it is to begin to live.

(c) Theosophy, with its mysterious cycles, symbols and personages, makes a great appeal to many minds. It constitutes a challenge to Evangelical thought to present in a fresh and attractive way God's plan of salvation in Christ Jesus. It is perfectly obvious that no mere moralism or mystic sentimentalism bereft of intellectual coherence or intelligibility will ever satisfy the needs of souls to whom Theosophy makes its appeal.

(2) As regards Spiritualism, it should be observed:

(a) That there is no absolute proof of the objective validity of the phenomena alleged by Spiritualists. It has been proved that famous scientists have been gulled by "mediums" whose art broke down when they were face to face with expert conjurers, that is to say, with men accustomed to deal with the subjective side of phenomena. A book worth reading in this connection is *THE FOLLIES AND FRAUDS OF SPIRITUALISM* by Walter Mann, published in 1919.

(b) It has been proved that by frequenting "seances" and in general dabbling with Spiritualism has had disastrous effects on many people. Their character became weakened and they fell an easy prey to suggestions of an unwholesome kind.

(c) The recent recrudescence of Spiritualism has been largely due to the personal losses occurred in the War. A new interest has been created in the problems of the soul and immortality. Even if some of the phenomena alleged by the Spiritualist were real, the Evangelical Christian knows a more excellent way. He ought to stress the reality of the Companionship of Jesus Christ, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit Who reveal to man's Spirit the "deep things of God", the things most worth knowing.

(3) We have said that Positivism and Christian Science are chiefly concerned about the material, that is to say, with the body. The former is interested in the perfection of the social organism and the latter in the individual human organism.

(a) Positivism breaks down in excluding all spiritual factors from life. It views the universe as a closed system, and itself as the final and ideal form of human thought and organization. Life cannot be interpreted in terms of the lowest, but in terms of the highest. Scientific formulas are not causal entities, but simple empirical descriptions.

(b) Enthusiasm for humanity, the apotheosis of human society is not a sufficient religious ideal. It may be sufficiently strong to guide the activities of a few select spirits, but men in general need more. Enthusiasm of this kind may set a goal before the righteous, but it will not bring sinners to repentance. And after all, the real problem of society centres in the weak and refractory multitudes. These need much more than the presentation of an ideal.

(4) Christian Science, as we have said, has taken no root in the South American community as such, so that we can discuss it very briefly. Its only interest for this Report consists in the fact that it is always a potential problem for the Evangelical Churches. To those in danger of being infected with Christian Science, it should be pointed out that matter is not evil, that Christ ~~redeemed~~ redeemed the whole man, body, soul and spirit, and that pain has a sacramental value in human life and is not necessarily evil or unreal.

To conclude, the best way to combat these systems will be to demonstrate that in the gospel of Christ and in the kind of life it produces are found ideal solutions for the workings of the mind, the agitations of the heart and the translation of thought and feeling into noble and constructive activity. There is no cosmic scheme like the scheme of redemption in Christ; no guidance so practical and luminous as the Companionship and the guidance of the Spirit of the living Christ; no enthusiasm for humanity like the enthusiasm engendered in the hearts which have become fellow-workers with God in the establishment of His Kingdom and no faith so potent for attacking evil and suffering everywhere as the faith of those who can do all things through Christ Who strengtheneth them.

CHAPTER V.

THE PROBLEM OF EVANGELICAL WORK AND PROGRESS.

It may appear presumptuous that the above problem should be treated in this Report as one of the "Special Religious Problems of South America", when, as a matter of fact, it might be regarded as the general theme of which each particular report treats a single aspect. It seems to us, however, that this Report would remain incomplete if our discussion of the South American mind, its attitude towards the spiritual, and the several spiritual forces which compete for its control, did not lead us to sketch this upon this broad background our conception of the special contribution which the Evangelical movement should make to the solution of the general problem. Our treatment of this subject will be as brief and synthetic as possible.

1. Let us glance, first of all, at the position of the Reformed Churches in Latin countries, in their historic and contemporary aspects.

It has been alleged that Protestant or Evangelical Christianity has never appealed to the Latin peoples. This is not so. Shortly after the Reformation the Protestant movement propagated itself rapidly in France and Spain. Some of the choicest spirits in both countries embraced the Reformed faith. Had it not been for the extraordinary violence of the Inquisition in Spain and the tragic thoroughness of its work, the religious history of that country would have been different. Nothing can be more unhistorical than to declare that the basic truths of the Reformation made no appeal in Spain. They won the minds and hearts of some of the best Spaniards and did not reach the masses, not because of any inherent unattractiveness but because the force of the Inquisition and the Counter-Reformation gave them no chance. At the present time the Evangelical Church in France counts among its members such a number of the most prominent citizens of that country as is out of all proportion to its numerical strength.

2. Criticisms of Evangelical Missions in South America.

Evangelical missions in South America have been criticized by national thinkers on three main grounds:

(1) The Evangelical movement has been criticized as an Anglicizing movement. It has even been criticized as a tool of imperialistic politicians. This leads us to make one or two reflections: (a) The term Pan-American should be abolished from all connection with Evangelical propaganda in South America. It is a term distasteful even in its political acceptation to many of the best minds on the Continent. Used in connection with Christianity, as in the title of a well-known book, PAN-AMERICANISM IN ITS RELIGIOUS ASPECT, it provincializes, or at best, continentalizes what is by nature universal. No worthy appeal for religion can ever be based on mere community of interests or spatial proximity. It is degrading to religious ideals to be juggled into the service of political ideals, however lofty, more especially when the latter are not congenial to all the parties concerned. It would be fatal to Pan-Americanize the gospel of Christ. The effort to do so



would be susceptible of only one interpretation, namely, that the gospel was a kind of local anaesthetic which made the work of political surgeons less painful. The gospel should be presented to Americans as men and not to men as Americans. (b) It is difficult for the popular mind in South America to appreciate the fact that men belonging to a powerful sister nation can work in other countries without being inspired by selfish or national interests. Service rendered for the pure love of God, of Truth and of human beings, is a difficult to grasp. For that very reason, the Evangelical Missionary should avoid all entangling associations with commercial or political interests in order that he may stand forth in the full light of day as God's representative and no other's. (c) Every effort should be made consistently with true progress, to accelerate the passing of the period of religious tutelage under which Evangelical Christianity exists in the Spanish countries of South America.

(2) It has been alleged that Evangelical Christianity in South America has been a moral failure.

In this connection a very severe indictment has been made of Protestantism on its moral side by an Argentine University Professor. In answer to the question, "Why is it that the work of the Evangelical Churches shows such slight progress in South America?" the Professor says:

"This is because we people of Catholic education - although it may seem paradoxical to you, - have a conception of religion in general, and of Christianity in particular, which is much higher and much more respectful than that which the Protestant peoples have. And, inasmuch as we consider Christianity as a religious, social, ethical ideal which is very difficult to attain to, we lay it to one side and live as pagans. But, at the same time, we are horrified by the facility and freshness with which Protestantism proclaims Christ and Christianity, while, at the same time, it maintains as low a level - socially, morally, politically - as does Catholicism.

But the great revealer of its collective morality was the late War; of its morality in private life, the daily contact with its adherents. Evangelical education does not improve life, and in some cases, it makes it worse. Furthermore, besides being Catholics, we are pragmatists. The epistle of James is always our epistle. Therefore, we say: if Protestantism leaves men - except in appearances - as pagan as does Catholicism, why change the one for the other? One is worth as much as the other.

This is, in my opinion, the reason why Protestantism does not progress in these countries - it has no moral efficacy."

In reference to the influence of the Bible, which is the chief agent of Evangelical propaganda, he says:

"I do not believe that the Bible has any efficacy in modern mentality. The War showed its failure in Northern Europe and America (i. e. the United States). The influence of the Evangelical Churches, especially as concerns morals, has proved its failure in South America."

It appears to us that this criticism is founded upon a confusion of two things which are fundamentally distinct: the natural ethical fruit of that personal contact with God which constitutes the basal principle of the Evangelical faith, and the conduct of nations, institutions or individuals that are Protestant only in name. The efficacy of Evangelicalism as a character-producing force cannot fairly be judged except in human lives and institutions that live in accordance with its principles. The root trouble with many so-called Protestants and Protestant countries is simply that they have been unfaithful to the truths of the religion they profess. However, we believe that there is historical evidence to show that when men live in accordance with its principles, Evangelical Christianity produces the very highest results in the formation of character.

It would be out of place in this Report to discuss the respective merits of Catholicism and Protestantism as transformers of human character. That subject has been amply dealt with by innumerable writers. Even if it were proved that the results of the Evangelical faith in moral, social and spiritual life had not been all that could be desired, our reply would be that in such a case it was because sufficient justice had not been done to the great liberating and purifying truths of the Christian sources which contemporary Protestantism is endeavoring to reach. As to the particular influence of Protestant Christianity in South America, its development has been too slight and of too recent standing for a judgment to be passed upon it. This, however can be said: That there is a district in the Peruvian Andes where the lives of thousands of Indians have been absolutely transformed into the highest types of manhood, and a work done which, according to impartial observers, Catholicism had not been able to do in four centuries. But in any case, the real question at issue is not what Evangelical Christianity has been, or what it is, but what it can become when it is fully loyal to itself and to its Lord.

As to the Professor's reference to the Bible, we shall be pardoned if we feel bound to say, in strict truth to that immortal Book, that his criticism reveals crass ignorance of the place of the Bible in the modern world. The Bible cannot be indicted because men refused to accept the principles of Jesus and embraced the pagan principle of force. But since the late War, which in its ~~parts~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ wistful minds in all parts of the world are turning to the teachings of this Book as the only volume which affords a solution to the problems of society. At the present time, more people are studying the Bible and guiding their lives by it than ever before.

(3) A more serious indictment still is that of "An Unattached Christian Worker" in a document which has been circulated by the Committee on Cooperation. The document in question contains a veritable philippic against the pretension of the organized Protestant Churches to solve the religious problem of South America.

The following are its chief theses:

- (1) That the Christian Church has a twofold function in the world: (a) Its primary objective is the moulding of individual character with a view to producing a perfectly socialized type, that is, a type which shall think in terms of the good of others and live for them. (b) Pursuit of this objective will lead to the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth, that is to say, "a juster and more brotherly state of relationship between men". The success of the Church in the discharge of this function will be determined by her study of the conditions that favour the Kingdom and those that are adverse to it, and at the same time, by her loyal support of all that is good, and opposition to all that is evil.
- (2) That neither the Roman Catholic nor the Protestant Church has a clear vision of the Church's true function, and only in recent times has the essential Christian ideal been rediscovered and proclaimed.
- (3) That in recent years the Catholic Church in South America has faced the problem of society in the person of such ecclesiastics as Edwards in Chile and de Andrea in Argentina, and for that reason, the effort of Protestant Missions on the Continent should be directed towards strengthening this aspect of the work of the Catholic Church, it being useless to think of pitting one Church organization against another.
- (4) That Protestantism originated as a purely theological movement and was not able to make headway in Roman Catholic countries in the sixteenth century, because of its exclusively theological aspect, which made it distasteful to peoples who had grown tired of theology. On the other hand, had such a movement as that of the Anabaptists or of the Quakers been known in Latin countries at the time of the Reformation, Protestantism in this form would undoubtedly have found acceptance and made progress.
- (5) That Protestant Missions at the present time give great prominence to minor doctrines which have no intrinsic importance especially for Latin Americans, and for that reason their work is very largely sterile. The Churches that support these Missions have more need of catching a vision of themselves of what the Kingdom of God means than of propagating in Latin America their dogmatic shibboleths and ecclesiastical institutions.
- (6) That the future of Christianity in South America is not bound up with ecclesiastics or with ecclesiastical organizations, but with lay workers. Christian endeavor should be directed towards intensifying every form of effort that makes for righteousness in both its ideological and practical aspects, and at the same time, create groups for the cultivation of the spiritual life.

These groups are described as "Religious fraternities, lacking the characteristics of Churches, sufficiently ample to admit such Catholics as may wish to intensify their religious life amongst the like-minded people, but in a form not compatible with their Church membership and those who have spiritual longings and sympathy with Christian ideals, as for the very person of Christ do not desire to ally themselves to any of the existing Churches. Such groups or religious fraternities, whose number might be unlimited, need not be uniform in their characteristics. Each group being of a limited membership, of identical tastes and standards, each would present the showing, and adopt the customs, which its membership might determine. Thus whilst some might lean to the mystical and spiritual, others would develop rather to an educational emphasis. One would suggest the organization of the Society of Friends, or Quakers, might serve as model for these organizations without the implication of servile copying.

The characteristic of these groups in any case would be that lacking in Pastorates or Sacramental practices (or substitutes for sacramental practices) they would not present themselves as rivals or in any way exclusive of existing churches. A member of any of them might ally himself with one of these fraternities, and such as do not claim membership with any of the existing churches would find in these friendly groupings an intimacy, the necessary warmth, which by companionship in ideals, shall intensify, or at least, cultivate the inner life."

The Evangelical missionary movement owes a debt of gratitude to an "Unattached Christian Worker" for his frankness. His point of view is representative of that influential school of religious thinkers which holds that the chief function of religion is sociological, that institutional Christianity is outworn and has no future, that Christian doctrine has a purely subjective value. It is not the function of this Report to discuss these questions. We confine ourselves strictly to those points in the document under discussion which have a direct bearing on our present subject. We second with enthusiasm that the point of view that the Christian Church has a mission of healing to human society, and that the social aspect of the Christian message and the social side of the Christian obligation have too often been forgotten. We take issue, however, with the writer of the document in three principal matters. First, the Protestant Reformation was not on its religious side the substitution of one style of theological logomachy for another. Religiously it had two aspects. On the one hand, it was a revolt against every mediating influence whether dogma, human person or institution which came between the living God and the human soul. On the other hand, it was a serious attempt to get back to primitive Christianity as that was portrayed in the Scriptures. The new principles exercised a profound influence not only on religious life but on political and social life as well. It is unfair to indict the Reformers with not having seen at a glance all the social and other implications of their own principles, and with not having been

able to anticipate the modern "Back to Christ" movement which is the child of subsequent generations of research and thought. They were men of their time, but their work was done on the highway of true religious and human progress. In some countries, notably in Scotland, they modified the whole social life of the people and proclaimed ideals which still constitute a goal for national achievement. It is exceedingly improbable, moreover, that had forms of Anabaptism and Quakerism been propagated in Latin countries at the time of the Reformation, the religious history of these countries might have been different. If the Spanish Inquisition not only extirpated Protestantism from Spain, led to the exile of a multitude of noble Spaniards who were friends of the Reformation, and even brought to task great national mystics like Saint Theresa and John of the Cross, it is not likely that apostles of the Inner Light would have met a different fate. If racial psychology counts for anything, we cannot imagine either Anabaptists or Quakers making headway in Spain or in a country where Spanish blood predominates.

Secondly, it is not correct to say that representative Evangelical missions in South America exist mainly for the propagation of their own peculiar theological tenets and the imposition of their special ecclesiastical forms. If they existed for this purpose and no other, the indictment of an "Unattached Christian Worker" would be justifiable. Happily, however, what representative Evangelical missions are specially interested in propagating is not what is peculiar to each but what is common to all. Their main object is to bring men into touch with the living Christ who can transform their lives. There is, we believe, no denomination within the group of Churches that form the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America that would not be prepared to sacrifice any number of non-essentials in theological thought and ecclesiastical procedure in the interests of the greater cohesive unity and efficiency of the Evangelical movement as a whole.

Thirdly, we believe that the formation of such religious groups as an "Unattached Christian Worker" proposes as the solution of the religious problem of South America have a place to fulfill in the religions of the Continent. Such groups, with their loose organization, would attract persons who have deep spiritual experience and convictions who find nothing to satisfy them among the organized Churches as they know them. On the other hand, we do not believe that they would exercise any spiritual influence over the great masses of the people who will never be evangelized, never become citizens and servants of the Kingdom of God, never develop a full Christian experience save through the instrumentality of organized Christianity. The fact that there is a coming time when religion shall be fully laicised, when human society shall be so fully Christian that there shall be no need of any special temple, but "the Lord God and the Lamb shall be the temple of it", does not mean that there is no place now for the special servant of Christ and the special place of worship. Rather we believe that the glorious consummation of Christian endeavor will be brought about when the members of the Apostolic Succession of preachers and teachers and the entire group of specially consecrated buildings serve the end for which they exist, and prepare themselves and society for the day of their exit, when God shall be all and in all.

In spite of adverse criticism, the Evangelical churches have an indisputable right to carry on work in South America. Christ's claims on the allegiance of men, the moral and spiritual needs of the Continent, the prevailing unrest, the nascent religious interest, the stark inadequacy of the Roman Catholic Church to transform character and provide leadership for thought, the presence of powerful anti-Christian forces, these facts constitute so many reasons why all questions of ecclesiastical etiquette should be laid aside and Evangelical Christianity give to the life of the South American Continent what it has in it to give. The Evangelical solution of life in and through the living Christ and loyal consecration to the task of being fellow-workers with Him in establishing God's Kingdom, is, we believe, the only one adequate to meet the needs of the present hour.

### 3. The Basic Conditions of Evangelical Progress.

We venture, in concluding this Report, to sketch what appear to us to be the basic conditions of Evangelical progress. If the Evangelical movement is to be a true organ of the purpose and power of God, two things are necessary from the human side. These are (1) A Prophetic Spirit and (2) An Adequate Embodiment.

Keeping before us the whole course of thought from the beginning of this Report, we will endeavor to present the implications of these two conditions. This we shall do in merest outline.

#### (1) A Prophetic Spirit.

The great need of the hour in South America is for prophetic men and prophetic books that shall speak in vital and arresting form to the spiritual needs of the Continent. Their oracles should flash new visions before the mind of the Continent, a new vision of sin, a new vision of Christ and a new vision of Christian discipleship.

(a) A new vision of sin is urgently needed. Men must be shown the hell of the present in the white background of the eternal laws of righteousness. There is need of what Puritan theologians called "law work" and "conviction of sin". The meaning of holiness in God and men must be interpreted to the people in language they can understand and burned into the very forms of consciousness. Isaiah's vision in the temple, the men whom Christ called "whited sepulchres", the stained hand of Lady Macbeth, the Scarlet Letter on a human bosom, the children's witness to the parents' sin, must all tell their lessons. The eternal distinction between right and wrong and the eternal connection between sin and punishment, must be written before the eyes of men as by the finger of God.

(b) A new vision of Christ is a second necessity. The Christ of pure tragedy and the passive virtues must give place to the Jesus who burned with indignation when in the presence of organized deceit and exploitation. A Christ must be presented whose active virtues should become the goal of human aspiring. But not only should men receive a full-orbed vision of the historic Jesus,

His significance as the eternal Christ, and His place in the whole cosmic process, should also be interpreted to them.

(c) A new vision of Christian discipleship is also needed. The fundamental relationship between believing and living should be emphasized. It should be shown that a believer in Jesus Christ cannot live for himself; cannot fulfill his religious obligations by the fulfillment of mere rites; cannot relegate his religious convictions to a wardrobe or a lumber room, to take them out only on special occasions. It must be pointed out that for each Christian soul there is a self to be denied, a Master to be followed, a Cross to be borne, and a Kingdom to be established, where God shall be all and in all, and where His will shall be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

(2) An Adequate Embodiment.

The prophetic spirit to which we have referred, must be adequately embodied in institutional forms.

(a) The Evangelical movement should touch life at as many points as possible. This is necessary for two reasons: firstly, because the movement is taken to represent civilizations which have been moulded by Evangelical thought and life, and secondly, because the Christian life should be expressed in connection with every legitimate form of human activity. In other words, it is necessary that as comprehensive a programme as possible of missionary activity should be developed in order that the results of Christian faith in different aspects of life may lead the thoughts of men to the Christ who is the object and inspirer of that faith.

(b) The Evangelical movement should be as non-ecclesiastical as possible. The impression should not be given that iron-cast kinds of ecclesiastical organization are necessary for the production and development of the Christian life. Special effort should be made to avoid the imposition or perpetuation of ecclesiastical forms which do not belong to the essence of the Christian life in its institutional aspect. This will mean that the idea must not be allowed itself to perpetuate itself in South America that Protestant denominations are no more than a set of warring organizations whose only aim and goal is their own glorification and aggrandizement.

(c) The Evangelical movement should give great prominence to the delivery of a religious message without the ordinary trappings of a religious service. It is our conviction that the greatest opportunity of the present hour in South America is theirs who will deliver God's message as it was once delivered by the sea of Galilee and on the Athenian Areopagus without any of the elements of worship. That is to say, what is known in Spanish as "conferencia sin culto" should become one of the recognized institutions of the Evangelical movement. From all parts of the Continent testimonies have come to the effect that the simple unaccompanied presentation of the gospel by men who have the power to do so clearly,

attractively and with passionate earnestness, will win a hearing anywhere. This kind of institution is particularly necessary on a Continent where the traditional conception of religion is that it is separated by an impassable chasm from all thought and life that are worthy of the name.

John A. Mackay -



COMMISSION XI.

REPORT ON  
SPECIAL RELIGIOUS PROBLEMS IN SOUTH AMERICA

FOREWORD

AIM AND SCOPE

In the preparation of this Report the Commission has kept before it a threefold aim, which may be stated briefly as follows:- (1) To analyze and describe the most characteristic features of the South American mind, investigate its present-day tendencies and consider them in relation to the general religious problem. (2) To study the main forces of a spiritual order which dispute the headship of Jesus Christ in the life of South America. (3) To offer solutions and suggestions whereby the problems created by these contrary forces may most adequately be dealt with and whereby the transforming power of Christ may be brought into most effective contact with the streams of individual and national life.

The scope of the Report is thus limited to the spiritual, taking that word in its broadest acceptation. An attempt is made to study those spiritual forces which have moulded, are moulding or aspire to mould the soul-life of the people. This is studied, on the one hand, as the product of hereditary and cultural influences, and on the other, as the battle-ground where rival powers dispute the mastery of the springs of life.

Five main problems or groups of problems are dealt with, namely,

1. The Problem of Racial Comprehension
2. The Problem of Contemporary Religious Consciousness
3. The Problem of the Roman Catholic Church as the dominant religious influence in South American life.
4. The Problem of Minor Religious Forces.
5. The Problem of Evangelical Work and Progress.

In presenting this Report to the Congress, the Commission is very much aware of its inadequacy in certain directions. It believes, however, that in other directions it has broken new ground. Its labours will be amply rewarded if it has succeeded in presenting in a new perspective the spiritual problems and tasks of Evangelical Christianity in South America, and contributes thereby to a more intelligent intensification of missionary activity.

Chapter I.

THE PROBLEM OF RACIAL COMPREHENSION.

This is no merely academic problem, nor should what follows be regarded as a mere prolegomena to a sociological study of South America. The first great step towards exerting a spiritual influence upon a people is to understand them. A people has the right to expect that foreign evangelists will, at least, take the trouble to appreciate them, if it were only for the sake of courtesy. As a matter of fact, it is of first rate practical importance for the fulfillment of the spiritual task in which missionaries are engaged that they should have an adequate and sympathetic comprehension of the people who are the object of their solicitude.

South Americans are becoming increasingly sensitive about what they regard as the inveterate incomprehension of missionaries. As an example, we take the statement of an eminent South American Christian, signing himself "An Unattached Christian Worker", who has expressed his views on the problems discussed by this Commission. This gentleman says:

"The Directorates of Missionary Associations who send Evangelisers to Latin America, are composed of people who do not know, nor appear to have any special desire to know, these countries; while the missionaries who are sent here, are persons who never become imbued with the environment, or if they do, are not disposed to fall out with their Directorates".

This indictment is unfortunately true to a most unhappy extent, and yet, how obvious the advantages to the missionary of a true comprehension of the people among whom he labours. It gives him a more intelligent appreciation of his task; it awakens in his heart greater sympathy with the people, and opens new doors of access to their affections; it imbues him with a new prophetic sense, and provides him with an antidote against

discouragement and disappointment in his work. How often is a missionary, especially a young missionary, almost driven to despair when he has been baffled by what appears to him nothing but a caprice in the members of the group among whom he works! How much it would contribute to calm his spirit and give him a fresh start, did he realize that the cause of his trouble was no mere individual caprice, but a national or racial trait! It was said of the Founder of the missionary enterprise that "He knew what was in man", and that knowledge was one of the things that kept His spirit unuffled.

#### SOUTH AMERICAN TRAITS.

We venture to analyze in the following pages the racial inheritance and cultural influences that have produced South American character. Such a study is obviously one of extreme delicacy, attempted, as it has been, by a Commission composed chiefly of foreigners, who voice their conclusions in the Athens of South America. Let it be clearly understood, however, that this analysis is not undertaken in any spirit of superiority or of supercilious censoriousness. It is concerned with the statement of facts, not with the passing of judgments. It is animated by a passionate love for the Iberian peoples, in all the branches of their ethnic dispersion and in all the phases of their spiritual pilgrimage. It is based, moreover, upon the writings of leading Spanish, Portuguese and South American authors, so that little more is done than to voice the opinions of those writers about their kindred.

It is worth while observing, in this connection, that modern Spanish and South American writers are much more introspective than are Anglo-Saxons. There exists a great wealth of literature devoted to self-analysis. This is a phenomenon to which British and Americans are not so accustomed, for hitherto, neither of the two great branches of the English-

speaking family has been particularly interested in analysing its personal traits. They have analysed each other's traits and have written of each other's institutions, just as Emerson wrote on English traits and Lord Bryce on the American Commonwealth. On the other hand, the profoundest studies of Peninsular and South American character have been done by nationals and not foreigners. The reason is fairly obvious. British and American thought has been essentially objective. The national history of neither of these people's registers a reverse sufficiently severe to have caused despondency or awakened the introspective habit on a national scale. Both live in the present more than in the past or in the future. On the other hand, the history of Spain has been a history of reverses from the days of Philip II, while the history of South America has been a history of upward struggles against tremendous difficulties. One of the results of this has been to make both the people of the motherland and of her ancient colonies essentially introspective. They have devoted time and thought to an analysis of the traits and causes which have brought about catastrophes or handicapped progress. They have tended, therefore, to live either in the past or in the future. The chief authorities who have been drawn upon for this character analysis have been: the portuguese historian Oliveira Martins, the Spanish "littérateur" Miguel de Unamuno and Carões Octavio Bunge, the Argentine sociologist.

1. Spanish Haughtiness.

Bunge, in his work NUESTRA AMERICA (Our America), which the noted Argentine thinker, Jose Ingenieros, considers one of the greatest books on South American sociology ever published, regards the fundamental trait in Iberian South American character to be what he calls "la arrogancia espanola" (Spanish arrogance). All other traits he regards as a modifica-

tion or effect of this primary quality. The classic arrogance or haughtiness of the Spanish race is shewn in a great many ways. It is characterised by an extreme individualism, egoism or selfishness. Sometimes it takes the form of idealistic aspirations; sometimes that of materialistic grovelling. Its two aspects are symbolised by don Quojote and Sancho, and give rise to many apparent contradictions throughout Spanish history and literature. It might be said that the history of the Spanish soul is a noted case of dual personality on a national scale. It is a tragic illustration of Stevenson's famous psychological study in "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde". Let us consider some spheres of life and thought in which this trait is objectified.

We find it first in the military and colonial history of Spain. In the romances which treat of the exploits of that legendary warrior El Cid, one of the chief goals of endeavour is always "el botín" (The booty) The famous pact of Panama, between the warriors, Francisco Pizarro and Diego de Almagro and the priest Luque, centres in the quest for gold. The conquest of Peru, just as the conquest of Mexico before it, originated in the selfish search for booty. Later, when the administration of her conquered territories devolved upon imperial Spain, the latter initiated a policy which has well been called one of "anarchic justice". There can be no doubt but that Spain made a serious effort to benefit her colonies, but she did so in accordance with that haughtiness inherent in the national character, refusing to take into account the legitimate desires of the governed, ~~refusing~~ upon whom she imposed her own abstract conceptions of justice. In other words, throughout her history as a colonial power, Spain has never known the meaning of accommodation to circumstances. She has been the ~~relentless~~ relentless in the defence of principles which she regarded

as abstractly just, and with which she considered her honour as bound up. In no people has a sense of "honour" - meaning personal or national dignity, been so strong or so uncompromising as in Spain. The Spanish "knight", for example, would rather die or beg than do work which he regarded inconsistent with his honour. So, too, would the nation as a whole. This national trait gives the clue to the continuance of the ill-starred Spanish campaign in Morocco.

The arrogant individualism of Spanish character is nowhere better exemplified than in the great mystics of the sixteenth century. Spanish mysticism found its culminating expression in St. John of the Cross. The mystical ideal of St. John is not to be lost in God, but to possess God, to absorb the deity into oneself. This ideal is reached by a long preparatory process in which the self passes through a "dark night" / on its way to the summit of "Mt. Carmel", becoming emptied of every thought and feeling related to earth, and thereafter, not as a result of meditation nor of any discursive mental process, but by a pure act of contemplation, sees God, loves Him and possesses Him. This goal is reached by blind faith, not so much in dogma, as in the Church as the arbiter of dogma. There is no place for an inner light or for the power of reason. The end is reached by submissive obedience to the Church. Unamuno in his penetrating analysis of Spanish mysticism makes a comparison between St. Theresa and St. Francis of Assisi which throws a flood of light upon the intense individualism of Spanish religious genius. He says:

"St. Francis does not shut himself up in his interior castle, but revels in the smiling and joyous countryside, delighting in God's air and sun. He scarcely concerns himself about converting heretics. His religion is one of the heart, and of human kindness. The stigmas of Francis are the Italian religious symbol, marks of crucifixion in redeeming one's neighbours. The Castillian symbol is the transfixion of the heart of Theresa, the arrow of the Bridegroom whose communion she enjoyed in solitude." EL TORNO AL CASTICISMO, page 64.

If one might say so, German mysticism was pantheistic, Italian realistic and Spanish individualistic.

The trait which we are discussing becomes further apparent in the fanaticism of Spanish religion. As a result of the wars with the Moors which culminated in the conquest of Granada, and especially as a consequence of the Spanish Inquisition, there was formed in the national spirit a passion for uniformity. The political ideal became identified with the religious. To differ from one of the established dogmas of the faith was regarded as a political crime and punished as an act of treason. In this the early individualistic arrogance of the Iberian race became transformed into national and religious arrogance. The Spanish nation regarded itself as the Lord's Anointed to impose the Catholic faith upon mankind. It is illuminating in this connection to compare the Jesuit and Dominican orders; which had their birth in Spain, with the Italian order of the Franciscans. Says Carlos Octavio Bunge:

"St. Francis of Assisi founds an order of mendicants which by their proverbial humility provoke a reaction against the Catholic arrogance of the potentates of the Church: St. Dominic founds an order of theologians destined to combat heretics with their proud scholastic argumentation. Here we have a profound divergence between Italian and Spanish character: the greater ductility of the former and the greater combativeness of the latter". (1)

It was the Spaniard Ignatius of Loyola and his militant order of Jesuit fathers who produced the Counter-Reformation and saved Catholicism.

The men who played the greatest part in the Catholicisation of South America were members of the militarist orders of Jesuits and Dominicans. It was natural, therefore, that the religious history of South America should be a tale of fanaticism, of a continuous effort to win laurels for the faith by fair and human means where possible, by foul and diabolic

(1) "Nuestra America" p. 67.



means where necessary. All men were summarily divided into the faithful and heretics, and no quarter could be given to the latter.

Spanish secular literature provides another illustration of the native arrogance of the writers. Roman Letters entered upon a new era when the Spaniards Seneca, Martial, Quintillian and others of their countrymen began to write in the language of the metrologic. The work of these writers is marked by a declamatory style, high-sounding words and far-fetched ideas - classic qualities of representative Spanish literature. Typical Spanish style is essentially inflated, a constant striving after effect in form and content. The two aspects of this "efectismo" are found in "Gongorsim" and Conceptism". As the style is the man, no better illustration could be found of strong Spanish individualism which makes everything centre in self. Calderón de la Barca is probably the most representative Spanish dramatist. Unamuno makes an interesting comparison between his works and those of Shakespeare. Calderón, true of his race, has few characters, and those all lacking in humanity and narrowly representative of the thought and life of his countrymen. Shakespeare, on the other hand, is broad as human nature itself, and in his leading dramas none could detect the English brain. In the dramas of Calderón the Spaniard never ceases for a moment to reveal himself. In his work there is an entire lack of "nuances". A most interesting form of literary arrogance appears in Cervantes and in Hernandez, the Argentine author of "Martín Fierro". At the end of his Quijote, Cervantes hangs up his pen so that no other hand may use it, while Hernandez destroys his guitar so that no other fingers may sound its chords. Unamuno himself reveals a touch of the same arro-

gance in his "LIFE OF DON QUIJOTE AND SANCHO", when in referring to Cervantes' statement that Don Quijote was born for him and that he was born to write the life of Don Quojote, he says that he, Unamunco, was born to write the authoritative commentary on that life. Cervantes' Quojote, the greatest product of the Spanish genius, and one of the greatest treasures of world literature, is essentially a satire on Spanish arrogance in the person of the KNIGHT OF THE MANCHA.

The native arrogance or self-assertion of Iberian ancestry is manifested in a number of ways in South American life. We find it in a certain lack of social cohesion and mutual confidence, in an apparent lack of modesty, in the emphasis on the principle of protest, in the classic code of "honour". It appears in the natural dislike to confess mistakes, in a distaste for the laborious work necessary to achieve ends, in the tendency to anticipate conclusions and rest satisfied with outward appearances.

The same principle manifests itself in what we might call the personal-mindedness of South Americans. Personalities are more potent than principles. The latter are often not the fruit of experience or of reflection, but of imitation, and, in their application, are relative to personalities. Thus many constitutions are perfect in conception though they may be violated in practice. The eminent Argentine publicist, Agustin Alvarez, has an article entitled LEYES PERFECTAS Y COSTUMBRES PESIMAS (Perfect laws and shocking customs). In practice everything tends to yield before the exigencies and self-assertion of individuals who are bold enough to impose their own will. We find, moreover, a strong instinct for extremes in appreciating things and persons. Judgment in both cases is generally guided by feeling rather than by

reason. Half tones are practically unknown. It is everything or nothing; a demigod or a devil. Personal ~~thoughts~~ contacts and introductions are all-powerful. Individual worth, until it has become admitted by all, is judged through the lenses of personal influence or attractiveness. Abstract right or merit will make little headway when not related in some way to personalities that are either influential or "simpáticas".

The precocity of youth is evidence of the strength of the same principle. People are grown up almost from the period of adolescence and think in terms of adult life and problems. The period of youth is, we might say, as brief as a morning twilight in the tropics. Too often there is a premature zenith and an early sunset.

(2) Creole Fatalism or Nonchalance.

South American descendants of Iberian and Indian forbears reveal in strange synthesis a sombre sense of inevitability and submission to fate and a careless happy-go-luckiness. There is in their character a fusion of the spirit of the Indian cacique and the Spanish hidalgo, of the imagination that created the messianic figure of Manco Capac and the mentality that revelled in the "literatura picaresca" of the ~~seventeenth~~ century. This particular trait reveals itself in a number of popular institutions, attitudes and phrases. Take, as an example, the attitude of the masses towards dictators. After a present <sup>id</sup> has repeatedly overcome opposition and it appears he has come to stay, his figure catches the popular imagination. The people in general bow to the inevitable and make no effort to achieve a constitutional change. There is in many quarters throughout the continent a pessimistic acceptance of things as they are. This we find in such current phrases as "Aquí

esto no se puede hacer" (Here this cannot be done), or "Esto no prende aquí" (This does not take here). There is untold faith in panaceas to remedy evils. Governments are looked up to as the purveyors of panaceas and the divinely-appointed distributors of posts and bounties. Acts of parliament are often substituted for popular moral effort to remedy ills. The lottery which is still prevalent in most South American countries, is a striking proof of the popular faith in the "lucky chance". The procrastination of the ordinary man is proverbial. The Spanish satirist Larra has a delightful popular study which he entitles VENGA Vd. MANANA (Come to tom-morrow). Darwin relates that once when he remonstrated with a "gaucho" to make better use of his time, the latter's reply was: "Es tan largo el día" (The day is so long), meaning that there was time for everything, tomorrow or next week, as the case might be. Thus it is that the hustle and bustle of many Europeans and North Americans is so distasteful to South Americans. It is vain trying to "rush" people who are awaiting the happy chance, the opportune moment, the necessary contact or introduction.

This trait has an intellectual as well as a popular aspect. The eminent Uruguayan thinker Vaz Fereria has drawn attention in his book "Moral para Intelectuales", to the fact that hitherto South American scientists have made no original contributions to science. This he attributes not to lack of talent nor to the lack of facilities for study or experiment, but to the traditional subservience of South American to European thought. In other words, or as Unamuno interprets the point of view of this South American thinker, it is "as if an Uruguayan or Argentine, a Spaniard what I am going to discover that has not already been discovered by a German, a Frenchman or an Englishman?"

It must be added, however, that in recent years, especially since the end of the war, a remarkable change has taken place. South American thinkers and scientists have discovered a new confidence in their own powers. Europe has lost a great deal of its traditional prestige and South American intellectuals have shaken themselves out of their classic sense of inferiority, and have the feeling that in some spheres of life and thought, they are even called upon to give the world a lead. This is particularly the case in the realm of international politics. The new spirit is an echo of Bolivar's famous saying: "If Nature opposes we will fight Nature and will conquer her". There is a new sense of the glorious destiny that awaits America. Narrow nationalism gives place to internationalism; Pan-Americanism to Pan-Iberianism. To the dictum of North American politicians "America for the Americans", South America replies "America for Humanity".

(3) Cultural Humanism.

Educated South Americans are true modern representatives of Hellenic culture both in its form and in its content. The Hellenism of South American culture is partly due to racial factors and is partly the product of their education which has been inspired chiefly by French models steeped in the humanism of the Renaissance.

As regards the racial factor, it is worth while observing that throughout Iberian history there appears no true sense of sin. According to both Unamuno and Bunge, Christianity, in its Roman Catholic form, never succeeded in awakening a consciousness of sin as moral evil in the Iberian race. These thinkers maintain that the Iberian spirit was naturally anti-Christian and that no Christian influence has ever modified it. This fact is of supreme importance when one comes to judge the very different outlook of South Americans on fundamental

moral problems from that which characterises Anglo-Saxons in general. The ancient Iberian feared death and punishment, but was not concerned about sin as an active moral principle. The phenomenon of an "awakened conscience" with its haunting sense of sin, has not the prominence in the religious literature of Spain and South America that it has in the religious literature of Protestant countries. The well-known Spanish drama of Tirso de Molina, "El Condenado por Desconfiado", is a study of sin and punishment. Here Paul the Hermit is condemned to perdition not because of moral evil in his life but because he allowed himself to doubt his salvation. He questioned, and that was enough to condemn him. His sin was more intellectual or theological than moral. On the other hand, there is nothing in the experience of the "saved sinner" Enrique to parallel the self-loathing of a Paul or an Augustine. His view of himself as "el hombre mas malo", is rather the result of an intellectual judgment than of a moral sentiment, while his salvation is more contingent on a belief in abstract mercy than on a radical change of heart. The lack of a deep ethical sense of sin is one of the characteristics of religious life in South America, whether in Roman Catholic or Evangelical circles.

Graeco-Roman influence upon Peninsular life is another of the racial factors that has informed South American Humanism. To this influence is due the essential Latinity of educated people. Two Latin traits are specially marked; one is a keen juristic mentality, and the other a highly developed aesthetic sense. The former of these accounts for the greater importance which South Americans attach to exhaustive constitutions and codes. Law and right in South America are

essentially "a priori"; in the Anglo-Saxon world they are largely empirical. The second trait mentioned reveals itself in the much more refined artistic taste of the average South American compared with the average Anglo-Saxon. This accounts for his unresponsive attitude towards the ordinary Protestant service and the tedium with which he listens to the ordinary missionary appeal. Protestant worship and Protestant missionary sermons offend his aesthetic taste. His dislike of the form makes him prejudiced towards the substance.

French culture has been the chief exotic influence ~~towards the~~ ~~substance~~ that has moulded South American thought. For the last hundred years, that is, since South American countries won their independence, French institutions, French education and French literature have left a profound impress upon the life and culture of the whole continent. Paris, not Madrid, is the Mecca of educated South Americans. They look to France for spiritual leadership.

In its intellectual aspect South American Humanism is characterised by a strong encyclopaedic tendency. There is a veritable mania for classification. The passion for "knowing about" is often realized at the expense of "knowing". It is not uncommon to be examined on universal literature without having been obliged to study at first hand any of the original texts. There is an insatiable intellectual curiosity quite as marked as that of the ancient Athenians, and opinions are more common than convictions. In some intellectual circles people with strong convictions are even disliked. They become labelled as sectarian and accused of not having open-mindedness, detachment and independence of judgment which should characterise true intellectuals. Culture has too often lived a cloistered or ornamental existence. The

intellectual has more frequently contemplated life from a balcony than elbowed it in the market-place.

In its aesthetic aspect this humanism itself in a keen sense of beauty both in form and content. Nothing will be tolerated unless it can be well presented, while anything will be pardoned if well expressed. The theory of "Art for Art's sake", without reference to moral content or influence has been maintained almost universally.

One of the characteristics of his humanism in its moral and social aspects is its lenient attitude towards sexual immorality. The figure of Doan Juan Tenorio, the libertine hero of a comedy of the Spanish poet Zorrilla, has impressed itself upon the popular imagination both in Spain and South America. There is a widely diffused popular philosophy which justifies the "sowing of wild oats" in youth. Public opinion draws a clear cut distinction between private and public conduct, and with the former it practically refuses to concern itself. A Peruvian intellectual when told of the famous indictment of <sup>a certain public man in the U.S.</sup> ~~Grover Cleveland~~ by his political enemies and his confession of moral delinquency in early youth, exclaimed: "What an extraordinary country in which what a man does in private life is brought into the limelight when he becomes a candidate for political position!" In religious life the faithful distinguish between a priest as a religious functionary and as a frail human being. There is infinite patience with human frailties, and there is no human weakness that is not readily condoned.

#### (4) New Factors.

None have been more conscious than candid South American thinkers that the classic traits of their race have not been constructive factors in social and religious progress. But no one can write about South American character without stating that new traits of a highly ~~st~~



dynamic and idealistic order are making their appearance. These traits have appeared so far only in select spirits and groups, but they are destined, we believe, to make their presence felt among the masses in the next generation. Whoever would influence spiritual life on this continent should understand and appreciate the new forces that are operating. These are: a new human passion, a new sense of destiny, and a new intellectualism.

A new human passion has made its appearance within recent years, particularly among the student class. The traditional absorption of students in pettifogging politics, in scholastic hair-splitting, in the enervating indolence and artificiality of social functions, is giving place to new interests. Says a leading Peruvian student in an article specially written for this Report:

"The students of Peruvian universities no longer while away their leisure moments in useless conversations in cafes or in empty gossip with the inmates of sensual saloons. . . they prefer more energetic expressions of life. The firm tumultuous notes of Wagner suit their taste better than the delicate and sentimental notes of Schubert."

"The students of the present hour", he continues, have a loftier and less egoistic concept of duty. They realize that they have a noble and immediate social mission to fulfill. . . . They are not indifferent to the cry of the people who drag out a miserable existence".

In a recent article entitled "Student Renaissance in South America" the writer says:

"The first characteristic of the new student generation in South America is that it is less intellectualistic and more human than its predecessors. Purely academic problems create little enthusiasm. The traditional oracles are dumb. The writers who awaken a response are men of human passion, men in whose writings intellect serves the heart, in whom enthusiasm for humanity and social justice predominates. The Spanish prophet Miguel de Unamuno, Anatole France, Henry Barbusse, Romain Rolland, H G Wells, Tolstoy, these are some of the men by whom the new generation swears. Occasionally the prophets of Israel are quoted in student magazines as champions of social justice in their day. More frequently will one find citations from the gospels, particularly those passages in which the Master utters His fiery denunciations against hypocrites and oppressors." THE STUDENT WORLD APRIL, 1924.

These young men and the great masses of workmen with whom they are in contact and whose spiritual leaders they are, are strong internationalists, are opposed to militarism and refuse to have anything to do with professional politicians.

If the new movement continues and gathers strength we may witness in the future, under the impulse of a new ideal, the modification of the traditional arrogance and individualism of the race.

Reference was made at the close of the section of Creole Fatalism ~~in the future under the~~ or Nonchalance, to the recent appearance of a new sense of Destiny. The debacle in European affairs and the discordant solutions offered to remedy the existing chaos, have produced a new sense of responsibility in the young Republics of South America. The sickness and agonizing cries of parents upon whom they depended so entirely for intellectual sustenance and guidance, have turned the thoughts of the children into new channels and opened their eyes to behold new horizons. Europe is sinking! America is the hope of the world! If so, she must put her house in order to be worthy of her providential mission. Thus a new sense of destiny and a concomitant sense of responsibility are being created. The motto "American for Humanity", should it catch the popular imagination, would powerfully contribute to modifying that psychological trait which we crystallised in the phrase "Creole Fatalism".

Closely connected with the foregoing is the appearance of a new intellectualism which revolts against the traditional Hellenism of intellectual life on the Continent. The champions of this new mental attitude proclaim that intellectuals should not be simple spectators of life's drama, but actors in it. They should live their lives not among the

monuments which commemorate the past but amid the thoughts and events which will determine the future. They should be prophets of glories to come and not priests of glories spent. "The philosophers" as Plato puts it, "must become kings", they must apply their theorising to the solution of living problems.

One of the leaders of the new crusade is Jose Ingenieros, whose monthly newspaper RENOVACIÓN may be regarded as the chief articulate expression of this new attitude towards life. Another leader, and perhaps the most dynamic of all is José Vasconcelos, later Minister of Public Instruction in Mexico. Although a Mexican, Vasconcelos exercises enormous influence on the new generation in South America. The students of Colombia and Peru have proclaimed him "Master of Youth". The discourses of Vasconcelos are the magna Charta of a new Idealism for men of thought and letters. Inspired by the principles of Jesus and using language of a strong Biblical flavour, this Latin-American prophet opens new vistas of worthy endeavour before the educated youth of the Continent. For the first time, we might say, in the intellectual history of South America, has a philosophy of life been formulated which proclaims that intellectual talent is prostituted if not placed at the service of noble human ends. A new factor, that of enthusiasm, is stirring many hearts. When it is realized that what has stifled originality in Spaniards and South Americans has not been lack of capacity, but lack of enthusiasm, which simply means the absence of a sufficiently dynamic ideal, who can calculate to what extent the life of the Continent may become modified in the future, when a sufficiently noble and dynamic ideal takes possession of the souls of men?

It may appear that too much space has been given to the foregoing analysis of South American traits, but we firmly maintain that a comprehension of the various aspects of South American psychology is an essential prerequisite, if we would seriously focus and understand the religious problem of the Continent and be guided in the formation of an adequate program for meeting the spiritual needs of the people.

C H A P T E R    I I

THE PROBLEM OF CONTEMPORARY RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS.

Having dealt with the general psychology of South American character, we now turn to the specifically religious consciousness of the people. This we shall also endeavour to analyse into its constituent elements. In dealing with the subject, we shall consider only those manifestations of the religious consciousness which are found outside the pale of the Evangelical Churches. The problem connected with Evangelical religion in South America will be dealt with in the last chapter.

As a prelude to the discussion, we quote the words of Dr. Amaranto Abeledo of Buenos Aires, regarding religion as a source of influence and interest in South American life. He says:

"Religion as such does not influence, and I doubt that it ever has seriously influenced the lives of the peoples. So-called believers never could see in it other than rites and ceremonies; unbelievers nothing more than superstition. Consequently, religion has never furnished to the first named any efficient control of conduct, nor to the second any matter worthy of serious attention. Hence it is that the expressions of Religious Fidelity, which now and again appear on the pages of our histories, either have no real significance or are children of a false historical interpretation, or respond to the desire to favour the continuance of certain practices, which, in spite of everything to be said against them, are deemed useful for the weaker vessels of society, i. e. for women and children. Thus Quiroga could inscribe "Religion" on his war banners but not therefore be any the less one of the most sinister figures in the anarchic period of our history. And Belgrano, illustrious and virtuous patriot, who is always classed ~~amongst~~ amongst sincere Catholics, whilst making mock of the infantile religious superstitions of the masses in the Highlands of Peru, did nevertheless omit no effort to placate them, delivering the flag he himself had created to the custody of the Virgin".

An analysis of the available data on the subject of the religious consciousness reveals three fundamental attitudes of the South American mind towards religion.

1. Roman Catholic Traditionalism.

What concerns us here is not a discussion of the Roman Catholic Church in South America as a religious organization, but rather the attitude towards the Church of those people who call themselves Roman Catholics. Roman Catholics in South America are divided into two main groups which we shall study in turn.

There are, first of all, those people who are interested in the institutional forms of Roman Catholicism while indifferent towards its spiritual content. It is generally admitted that the vast majority of South American ~~Republics~~ Catholics belong to this class. They are interested in the Roman Catholic Church for social, sentimental or political reasons. The Church has united them in marriage, has baptized their children and admitted them to First Communion, and performs the last rites upon their dead. By belonging to the Church they conserve their social position and relationships which means a very great deal where family life is concerned. Among the lower classes, one of the chief ties which binds people to the Church is the social aspect of the innumerable festivities celebrated under its auspices. Others are interested in the Church because it has been identified with the history of their race. Their ancestors for long centuries back were Catholics; their country is Catholic; they were born Catholic; and to regard themselves as anything but Catholic would create an unwarrantable rift in the continuity of their lives. Many continue to be interested in the rites of Catholicism because of an indefinable fear of making any break with the Church. Others again are Catholics because by being so, in countries where the Catholic Church enjoys such prestige and possesses such political influence, it is easier to obtain political preferment. It has been said that students during the greater part of their university career

have no interest in religion, but when the time comes for them to embark upon life, they suddenly develop a new interest in the Church.

On the other hand, only a minority of these people have any real interest in the spiritual content of Catholicism. President Alvear of the Argentine Republic is quoted as having made the statement: "I have become acquainted with Catholics in France but I have never met a single Catholic in Argentina." A Peruvian priest admitted some years ago to an evangelical missionary that the proverbial devoutness of Peruvian women was no more than the power of custom. True religious sentiment and experience were absolutely lacking. It is also a fact which has been observed by correspondents of this Commission in different countries that the Indian population, while fanatically Catholic as regards the Church as an institution, are still essentially pagan in their deeper religious life and have even conserved a number of pagan rites which have been camouflaged in the course of the centuries. Dr. José Galvez, the eminent Peruvian writer, referring to the point under discussion in a study especially prepared for this Commission, says:

There is, in the true sense of the word, no religious foundation in our people. As regards the Indian, a very interesting phenomenon occurs. The Spanish conqueror was preoccupied in educating him in what he believed, and the missionary and friar laboured much to achieve this object, but the Indian, who is naturally distrustful, feigned interest, as I think, on most occasions, and superimposed for the sake of appearance, the new rites upon the old, giving rise to a strange religious syncretism of which there are evidences in a series of Catholic practices which have clearly an idolatrous meaning. There is scarcely a place of pilgrimage in Peru which is not related to a very ancient and indigenous religious custom. Where before the Conquest they adored stones there are now sanctuaries. Up to what point the Indian continues believing in many of his ancient beliefs is a matter to be investigated. In the ancient chronicles there are data which arouse the suspicion that the Indians often fooled their teachers, making them imagine that they believed in the Catholic rites when in reality they did no more than superimpose them on the dim foundation of their genuine idolatrous ceremonies. When for reasons of organization and the

mechanism of ritual, the missionary was replaced by the parish priest, the problem increased. The Indian possesses a selfish concept of religion, and as regards rites, prefers those which have a likeness to his ancient sun-worship. If today, as in the days of the colonial period, an attempt were made to discover whether the idolatrous practices survive, many of these would be found. The numerous mass of superstitions which have lasted to the present day, are evidence of the fact.

An interesting case of dissidents within the Roman Catholic Church comes from Brazil. The Brazilian Commission reports ~~x~~ on this subject:

"A great number - the vast majority - of Roman Catholics do not submit to the Church which they need only for cases of birth, marriage and death and for social celebrations and recreations. It is very frequently heard: 'I am a very religious man. I have my own religion. I do not believe in going to the confessional and attending Church services.'"

On the other hand, many people are Catholic to the point of the uncritical ~~unofficial~~ acceptance of Roman Catholic dogma. These are, in their great majority, women. They are not always conversant with the full doctrine of the Church, but they are blindly Catholic. Sufficient for them to know that the Church affirms or denies something in order to accept or reject it with fanatic fervour. Their faith is what is known as "La fé del carbonero" (The coalman's faith), who said he believed what the Church believed, and when asked what the Church believed, replied: "The Church believes what I believe." Among such people it is not uncommon to hear the paradoxical saying: "I am a Catholic but not a Christian". For them, even the word "Christian" is suspect.

## 2. Religious Scepticism.

A large section of the people are sceptics in matters of religion. Their scepticism takes different forms.

Some are hostile towards religion and towards Christianity in particular. A remarkable case of anti-religious sentiment is recorded of the editor of one of the leading newspapers in South America. On one

occasion, when this newspaper transcribed a portion of the Constitution of the United States of America, it did so leaving out the name of God. When brought to task very severely for this omission by other members of the local press, the answer was given that the divine name was omitted because the concept connected therewith was too utterly antiquated to be incorporated in any serious contemporary document! The Republic of Uruguay has given secular names to all public festivals, suppressing all names with a religious association. As an example, it has changed the name "Holy Week" into "Touring Week", affording thereby a further illustration of the same anti-religious spirit.

In most cases hostility to religion takes the form of opposition to the Roman Catholic Church, especially to the Roman Catholic hierarchy. Anti-clericalism is one of the dominant notes in the life of each South American country. Even many who are sincere Catholics are violently anti-clerical. This question will be considered more particularly in the chapter devoted to the problem of the Roman Catholic Church. There is, in addition, considerable opposition to Protestantism. The whole evangelical missionary movement is viewed by many people as essentially political in its aims. They regard it as a political weapon of the United States, a preparing of the way for so-called "Yankee imperialism". This particular aspect of the subject will be dealt with in Chapter V when we come to treat of the problem of evangelical work and progress on the continent.

It must be admitted, however, that positive hostility to religion is not so common in South America at the present time as it was a generation ago, when the philosophy of positivism swayed the minds of thinkers and politicians. For example, there are no great writers at the present time who follow in the steps of the Peruvian, Gonzalez Prada, and the



Ecuadorian, Montalvo. So far as religious scepticism is concerned the sneer of Voltaire and the air of intellectual superiority with which Comte and his followers relegated religions to the past has given place in many minds to a deep-seated indifference.

Indifference towards religion is probably the predominant mood of the majority of educated people and of a large section of the common people. The religious problem as such has no interest for them. For them there is no problem. They have not thought the matter through nor come to such reasoned conclusions as would lead them to adopt a definitely anti-religious position. They rather adopt a passive attitude, excluding religion from the purview of their thoughts. In very many cases this indifference is no more than a natural reaction of mental maturity against the rigidity and formalism of the religious education received in the home and in the school. Dr. José Galves admirably describes the attitude of such people in the following passage:

"You ask me how far the religious problem exists in South America for intellectuals, for youth and for the public in general. I will answer you what I know about my own country. He who is here called "an intellectual" has no great preoccupation about the religious problem. For some, religion is a custom which for the sake of convenience they prefer not to investigate or discuss. For others - atheists whom we find in considerable numbers - the problem does not exist except as a subject of occasional conversation. The way in which philosophic studies have been carried on in Peru - a way excessively intellectual - has been responsible in no small degree for this phenomenon. Education in the homes of the people is religious, marked by a religiosity of an extremely ritual nature. All receive it. Some free themselves from its influence. Others conserve it, and some few - very few - discuss it. Among the last named there are a few who arrive by an intellectual process at atheism, and having once taken up the negative position of "I do not believe", they take no further interest in the subject. On the other hand, I know intellectuals who say, "I believe", who, just as in the former case, take no further interest in the subject. I believe that this situation is due to the exaggerated ritualism which has always existed in the home and in the school. A kind of tiredness befalls some, others become mechanised. The religious problem in its grand and beautiful sense of loving curiosity to understand the creation, life and conduct,

scarcely exists for our intellectuals. We have not produced a single mystic writer. As regards the general public, it is necessary to divide it into sections. Among the well-to-do classes, religion exists as a custom. I do not doubt that there are very many sincere and even some mystic spirits, but the religious problem as such, does not exist. Families follow ancestral habit, fulfil their ritual obligations, go to mass, confess, communicate, hear sermons, the most of them meteoric and pompous, and believe without asking themselves often what they believe, and what is much more serious, for what they believe."

Reports from other South American countries confirm the above analysis of the prevailing religious indifference. The following statement of an Uruguayan student is interesting in this connection, presenting, as it does, the outlook of a section of present-day South American youth upon religion:

"Their conception of religion (that of young Uruguayans) is that it represents solely ritualism, formalism and pre-occupations about the other life. The evil is due to the Roman Church which in these countries of America has been sole master of the religious field. It has left in the spirit of youth a false concept of what religion is. The word "religion" alarms our young men. The name of Christ does not inspire profound admiration, and Christianity is regarded as simply moral doctrine, or a superior but unrealizable conception of life - only a stupendous theory. They do not understand that there can be Christians who are not sad and groaning individuals. They ~~do not~~ do not admit that Christianity is a renovating and powerful force, a source of stimulus for action on behalf of humanity."

To the same purpose writes Dr. Ernesting Nelson regarding the prevailing religious indifference in the Argentine:

"Speaking broadly, men are non-religious, and I must declare that the great majority of men who have distinguished themselves in public service are men without Church connection. I will go so far as to state here that a sort of suspicion lingers about a Churchman for people know that loyalty to the Catholic Church does not always mean loyalty to what is right and just. However, no matter how out of sympathy a man may feel against the Catholic Church, the foundation principles of Christianity often find a sympathetic response from him. That is not a general fact, however. In the minds of educated men, there is often no place left where sound religious ideas may develop. With them even morality has lost its religious foundations. In such cases morality

derives its strength from the sense of honour or from patriotic motives. You will find hundreds of men ready to accept their neighbor's burden whose acts are prompted not by religious motives but by an unmixed sense of duty and a pure desire to do good.

.....  
Men of moral stamina generally drift away from religious activities as soon as they discover that the Catholic Church is chiefly a power-seeking institution and that ignorance and superstition are her most fruitful allies."

### 3. Nascent Religious Interest.

In spite, however, of the widespread religious indifference, there has made its appearance in South America in recent years, and in some countries more than in others, a decided interest in religion and in the things of the spirit. This nascent religious interest is due to a series of causes. One of these causes has been the philosophic influence of such thinkers as Bergson and Boutroux, Emerson and James, who have routed the systems of Comte and Herbert Spencer, the men by whom the last generation swore. It is a remarkable fact that the Peruvian thinker who first introduced the philosophy of Spencer to the intellectual life of his country, lives to introduce Bergson - an instance of how thoroughly South American thinkers have been swayed by prevailing tendencies in European thought. The idealism of the thinkers mentioned made a place for religion and for spiritual values in life.

A second cause has undoubtedly been the recent popularity, especially among the younger generation, of the work of men like Tolstoy, Unamuno and Romain Rolland. It has dawned upon the youth of the continent that intellectual and religious interests are not incompatible nor mutually exclusive, but that there are great progressive thinkers for whom religion constitutes the chief source of their mental energy and the chief object of their spiritual preoccupation.

One might specify as a third cause the deep-seated feeling that one of the lacks in South American life hitherto has been the absence of a spiritual ideal. For the supply of this lack men look wistfully towards religion.

(a) Intellectual Interest.

Let us consider some of the forms in which this most hopeful phenomenon expresses itself. We find it first as an intellectual interest. For the reasons above stated, religion has become accepted as one of the fundamental phenomena of human experience, and as one of the problems most worthy of study. The success attending the "conferencias" on religious subjects recently given in different cities of the Continent by Young Men's Christian Association lecturers is striking proof of this statement. It has been demonstrated during the last few years that any public speaker who has a religious message and knows how to present it in a tactful and attractive manner will command an audience and a hearing in any large centers. An instance of this was the deep impression produced in Lima in June, 1924, by a course of twenty lectures on the subject "The Evolution of Religion in the Ancient World", delivered by Sr. Julio Navarro Monzó. One who attended these lectures wrote of them afterwards as follows:

"The success of the series of twenty lectures was far greater than the most sanguine of us had ever expected. The Association hall was packed every evening with a most appreciative audience, representative of all classes of the community. There were foreign diplomats, University professors, evangelical pastors and members of their flocks, students, workmen and the general public, old and young. Every evening there was a good sprinkling of the fair sex. One of the most extraordinary things about the attendance was that a very large nucleus attended the course of twenty with absolute regularity. One of the factors which undoubtedly contributed to arouse public interest and keep up so large an attendance was the unprecedented publicity which the lecturers received in the press. On the last evening of the course, when the subject was Christ and the present value of Christianity, people began to take seats an hour before the 'conferencia' began. At half-past six, the hour of commencing,

the hall was packed, and even the central passage crowded right up to the table. We were literally like herrings in a barrel. Imagine two hundred and sixty people in that hall and dozens who had to go away because they could not get near the door!! It was an evidence of the fact that at the present time there is nothing that will draw such an audience as a discourse on Jesus Christ when the Master's figure and significance are presented by a speaker who knows how to do wit worthily."

A similar testimony is given by Sr. Oscar Griot who writes:

"Some years ago I gave a series of lectures in the city of Asunción, Paraguay, upon the personality of Christ, studying it on the lines followed by Naville. The students and professors of the University attended those lectures in mass and have retained very deep-rooted memories of them."

And he adds:

"Those same persons, however, have never attended any religious service advertised as such."

Some other lectures in which the religious note was predominant have found their way into some of the leading literary reviews of the Continent.

Another convincing proof that religion is now being regarded by many educated people as a problem worthy of their attention, we find in the proposed programme for the second National Congress of Peruvian Students to be held in Lima in December, 1924. The following paragraph, which we take from the programme in question, contains the ideas of the chief promoter of the Congress:

"The Students' Congress cannot handle the religious problem in the form in which the generations of last century would have done. The youth of today must face this problem free from every kind of prejudice, both from the prejudices that come from fanaticism and dogmatism and which are a consequence of professing a religious creed, as well as from those which are derived from an incomprehensive, anachronic and sectarian Jacobinism. The relations between Church and State, the relations between the Church and the community, should be contemplated as purely social questions, with serene criterion free from all passions.

"The religious problem possesses a very interesting aspect for the youth of the present generation. The life of man cannot be reduced to the satisfaction of material necessities. His spirit

has profound longings; it asks itself serious questions which can only be satisfied and answered in the domain of art and religion. These deep needs of the spirit cannot be forgotten by youth when it confronts the religious problem. They cannot be extinguished; they must, therefore, be satisfied; they are essential to human life; they, therefore, merit our respect. These concepts have not been taken into account in the past. The external and social aspect of religion has been confounded with its inner and moral aspect. This explains the fierce fanatical struggles which have been provoked whenever the religious problem was tackled. The free and idealistic youth of today should delimit well those frontiers and not confound religion itself with its exploiters."

(b) Spiritual Interest.

Evidence is not lacking of a widespread spiritual unrest throughout the Continent. The existing interest in religion is much more than intellectual curiosity? there is a deep-seated hunger of the soul which expressed itself in ceaseless yearnings. We quote José Galvez once more, this time as a witness to the reality of a spiritual search. In the following paragraph the Peruvian poet relates his spiritual pilgrimage from the naive faith of childhood, through atheistic gloom, to a new dawn:

"I have passed through various stages in the matter of religion. I was brought up in an environment in which Catholic practices were strictly observed and as a child I believed with fervour and - why should I not say so? - even with fear, in all that I was taught at home and in the Jesuit College. Afterwards, when a little older, I began to doubt. I cannot tell why, for I can recall no particular event which motivated such doubts. I doubted to the point of suffering, and reading did the rest. It was disordered reading of every kind of book. I believe that Gonzalez Prada, whom I greatly admired, contributed by means of his irreligious writing, to make me a kind of radical. I was an atheist. Do not smile. I was even a half "frailafobo" (priest-hater), but afterwards my soul slowly reacted. I began, as a very young man, to look much at the sky and to look at it without any great astro-nomic preoccupation. I looked at it with religious, almost mystic, preoccupation. Perhaps I was influenced by the sadness and poverty of my infancy, and the difficulties of my youth, which gave me occasion to be more pensive than my best friends and comrades have ever been able to suppose. This stage has been very long. I believe it lasts still. I feel the need of believing and I believe in a Supreme Power, in a force which is within and without me, but as yet there has not been formed definitely within me the

religion which I need. I believe in its necessity for every one without exception, and I believe that my spirit is at bottom truly Christian. Never did man reach his highest and profoundest greatness so much as when Christianity appeared. To my way of thinking, Christianity is what has made humanity what it is in part, and what it should be entirely. I am in my own way a Christian, and I think I live within the essential criteria of the ideology, the sentiment and the norms of Christianity, but I have not been able to return to its rites."

Another most interesting case is that of a young Peruvian professor of philosophy. This man is the author of a number of philosophic works. Some years ago he developed an intellectual interest in the religious aspects problem, becoming interested especially in its aesthetic and metaphysical aspects. Now, however, upon his own confession, he is in search of what he describes as a "spiritual Companion". For him, the essence of religion has come to signify companionship, and for a divine Companion he longs. In his classes in the University, he lays special emphasis upon the fact that mere idealism is insufficient as a basis for morality. Religion is absolutely necessary for life that is worth the name. His spiritual search leads him to devour every book on religion that comes into his hands. Recently he requested an evangelical friend to procure for him Harnack's great work on the "History of Dogma", and Sir William Ramsay's "Paul the Traveller and Roman Citizen". For Paul he has boundless admiration and seeks means to understand better his thought and life, being doubtless drawn to the great apostle of the Gentiles by his combination of a sense of personal companionship with Christ, and his metaphysical interpretation of Him in the scheme of things.

Two cases are worth mentioning of seekers belonging to the intellectual class who have reached a positive faith in Christ. One of these is Señor Julio Navarro Monzó the ex-journalist and art critic, who is now devoting his life to religious work under the auspices of the

Young Men's Christian Association. The life of Navarro Monzó has all the elements of a spiritual romance. Son of a Portuguese diplomat, he settled in Buenos Aires a number of years ago. In his adopted country he occupied for some time the position of secretary to the Minister of State, and in 1918, when the memorable students' strike broke out in the University of Cordoba, Navarro Monzó was sent to reorganize the University. During this time he was art critic of "La Nación" of Buenos Aires. In this position he made a name for himself by the penetrating and lofty moral tone of his criticisms. During all this time his soul hungered for rest and purity. He became a member of the Greek Orthodox Church in Buenos Aires, but did not find what he longed for. This contact, however, served to put him in touch with the Gospels, and there he found Christ. Shortly afterwards he came into touch with the Young Men's Christian Association, of which he became a member, and of which he is now one of the Secretaries of the Religious Work Department. His latest book, published in 1924, which he calls "Horas y Siglos" (Hours and Ages) consists of a collection of prayers from great religious leaders of the Roman, Greek and Protestant branches of Christianity.

The other case is that of José Carlos Rodriguez, the director of a leading newspaper of Rio de Janeiro, who became interested in Christ and the Scriptures. In 1921 he published a learned introduction to the Old Testament in two large volumes. His chief object in this work, as he states it in the preface, is to show how Old Testament history and literature reveal God's activity in the preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ, the Son of Man and the Son of God. This is the first book of its kind that has ever been published in Spanish or Portuguese, and may be taken as the first fruits of what may be expected when Jesus Christ



takes possession of the heart and mind of intellectual men in South America, as He has done in other parts of the world.

The increasing number who become adepts of spiritualism and theosophy might be mentioned as a further aspect of the same spiritual unrest. This phenomenon, however, will be dealt with more particularly in Chapter IV. of this report. It will be sufficient to draw attention at the present stage to the fact that interest in these movements is due to a striving after the unknown, the mysterious and the spiritual.

From what has been stated in this chapter, it becomes evident that the contemporary religious consciousness in South America is very complex; but that there can be observed in the upper reaches of thought, a distinct tendency towards what is idealistic and spiritual. This tendency is more marked in some countries than in others. Students of religious life on the Continent who are conversant with the situation in different countries have remarked that it is probably in Peru where the rising tide of spiritual interest has reached its highest in representative men. Whether this be so or not, it is <sup>a</sup> fact that there are thoughtful men in every South American country who are no longer satisfied with positivistic science and even idealistic philosophy. They reach out beyond the limits of verifiable facts and airy concepts. They scan the universe for a Companion. Their eyes, as Galvez puts it, "look much at the sky". In a number of cases this search has ended in the embracing of Christ and Christianity, but with the attainment of the goal of their aspiring, a practical difficulty presents itself for many. They refuse to have anything to do with what they call "sectarianism". So far as the organized denominations are concerned, these men remain churchless. This problem will be dealt with at length in Chapter V. of this report. Let it suffice for the present that

what chiefly interests and rivets the thought and affection of these seekers is Christ Himself. They "would see Jesus".

The fact that those for whom Christ has become the centre of life and thought manifest a preponderating interest in the application of Christian principles to the solution of social problems, has led some of to venture the opinion that the ecclesiastical, the supernatural and the metaphysical aspects associated with historical Christianity will never interest South American life and thought. This opinion, we believe, to be unwarrantable. Apart from what may be expected a priori as a result of true conversion to Christ, we find, as a matter of ~~fact~~ fact, concrete evidence in the lives of such men as those whom we have instanced, to lead us to believe that a Christianity which has a place of worship as well as a social programme; for a Divine Lord as well as an historic Teacher; for Divine interventions in human history and experience as well as the record of religious musings, will be the form of Christianity that will make the deepest impression upon the South American mind and heart.

S. G. Inman

AMERICAN SECTION

THE

# COMMITTEE ON COOPERATION IN LATIN AMERICA

REPRESENTING THE AMERICAN AND CANADIAN MISSION BOARDS WORKING IN LATIN AMERICA

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To the Members of the Commission

on Special Religious Problems in South America

for the Montevideo Congress:

I am enclosing you herewith the most important report of Commission XI and ask your very careful and prompt attention to it. You will realize that this deals with the most controversial subject of the whole Congress. I value very highly Dr. Mackay's judgment but on reading the report the following points have occurred to me. It seems to me that the report gives too pessimistic an impression considering it as a whole. Concerning the Chapter on Roman Catholicism, in my opinion it does not give enough credit to what the Church has accomplished nor does it take into account sufficiently the historic difficulties nor differentiate enough between the more liberal church in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay and that in the backward countries like Colombia.

Its implications seem to be that Protestantism has practically solved all of its problems and that if our forces were allowed to shape Christianity in South America all problems might be eliminated. You will notice, of course, that all of the report is not included. We are expecting the remainder within a few days.

In facing up to the questions involved in this report, I think we ought to realize that with all the reports of the Montevideo Congress, with the books that are now being written for Latin American mission study next year, with the book just issued by Dr. Browning on "Latin America and Roman Christianity", - while these are somewhat separate, - yet the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America might be thought of as making a tremendous concerted attack in all three of these ways on the established church in South America. I do not say that this is not the right thing to do but I think we ought to face the combined results as they will be felt by people outside our own circles. In any case, whatever is done about this report must be done quickly.

IE

Faithfully yours,

S. G. Inman

A fair-minded and thorough study of the matrix out of which religion has been born in S. America. The historical background is clearly sketched without undue exaggeration of any of its tints. In orderly analysis it is admirable.

Protestants have always found it difficult, if not well-nigh impossible, to understand Roman Catholics. The degree of their sympathy and comprehension depends on the skill of an interpreter. Dr. Mackay, it seems to me, has accounted for many of the distinguishing marks of Iberian culture and faith without accentuating what is common to all mankind.

Anti-clericalism, while rampant in upper circles in S. America, is not confined to lands which are overwhelmingly Roman Catholic. The new intellectualism is a ferment among all aspiring peoples. Even a socialist orator is given a fair hearing when he lauds Jesus Christ and champions ideal justice for all classes. The objections lodged against Catholicism by secularists would be reiterated against Protestantism by the same cavillers.

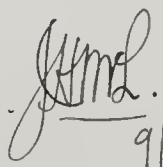
Many Latin-American traits are merely combinations of human frailties, familiar the world over. They are embedded in the race rather than in the group, spiritual more than ethnic. Some of them are praiseworthy and call for emulation - the keen juristic mentality, the highly developed aesthetic sense, the habit of courtesy, the refusal to be hurried and goaded by the itch of production etc. To be different does not signify, necessarily, to be inferior or deserving of stigma.

It is only just to record the general confidence in the Roman Catholic Church as a bulwark against social anarchy and a world-wide diplomatic organization seeking to promote peace and international concord. The motives back of their established policy are hard to appraise but these two tendencies are apparent in their program and activity.

What the River Plate Regional Committee has summarized is the essence of mature experience alongside the P.C. Church. Alongside a similar analytical study of Protestantism it would afford the two-fold challenge which we all need. All the facts of the case warrant the judgments expressed by the River Plate Committee.

The tone of this inquiry is scientific. But for every error there is a reason, however inadequate it may seem to us. The failure of Roman Catholicism carries with it the implication of the failure of Protestantism to a degree.

With such an elaborate prologue, the chapter on Evangelical Christianity ought to prove intensely practical and interesting

  
9/12/22.